S 535
.C2 M5
Copy 1

CHILDREN *of* THE LAND

The Story of the Macdonald Movement in Canada

By

HERBERT FRANCIS SHERWOOD

Reprinted by permission from

The Outlook

New York, April 23, 1910

CHILDREN *of* THE LAND

The Story of the Macdonald Movement in Canada

By

HERBERT FRANCIS SHERWOOD

Reprinted by permission from

The Outlook

New York, April 23, 1910

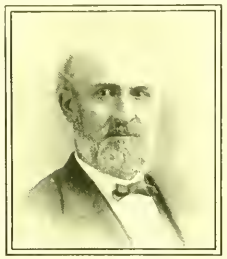
CHILDREN OF THE LAND

The Story of the Macdonald
Movement in Canada

CHILDREN OF THE LAND

THE STORY OF THE MACDONALD MOVEMENT IN CANADA

BY HERBERT FRANCIS SHERWOOD



SIR WILLIAM C. MACDONALD

AMONG those who, more than a century ago, received an allotment of land in Prince Edward Island was a Scotchman who had been an officer in the British army. He possessed all the ginger and independence of spirit of the Scotch Highlander, and was in no fear of the constituted authorities when they did not agree with his construction of things. When he spoke, it was as if he were upon the housetops. He cared not who knew his views.

On one occasion he was very outspoken regarding the behavior of the legislators of the island. It came to their ears, and to them it looked very much like contempt of authority as represented by themselves. Thereupon they sent their clerk to summon this audacious citizen to appear before them and answer to the charge. When the clerk, fully armed with the majesty of authority, appeared upon the farmstead of the Scotchman, the latter called forth his muscular farmhands and had the clerk locked in the stable on the charge of trespassing on a freeman's property. This action scared the poor clerk, and when he was finally released he returned such a report to his official superiors as to cause them formally and solemnly to resolve—as they put it—not to further the desires of this contumacious man for self-advertisement by paying any more attention to him.

This independent-spirited Scotchman was a grandfather of Sir William C. Macdonald, the tobacco manufacturer of Montreal, who has given more than eight millions of dollars for the advancement of education in Canada. He helps one to account for the vitality, the energy, the persistence, which his bachelor grandson has exhibited in his career, and for the fact that the latter gives one the impression of being nearer threescore than his actual age of seventy-eight years.

Sir William is one of two men of Scotch ancestry who are recognized from one end of the land of "Our Lady of the Snows" to the other as among those who are leading Canada forward to higher things. The other is James Wilson Robertson, the former Principal of Macdonald College, for the construction and endowment of which Sir William gave approximately five millions of dollars. They are not so well known on the southern side of the Canadian border as they ought to be.

Sir William was born on Prince Edward Island. He left home at an early age to make his way in the world. For a time he was employed in New York, and then

he turned his face toward Montreal and became interested in the manufacture of tobacco. The conditions existing in the United States at the time of the Civil War greatly favored his enterprise, and at that time he laid the foundation of his fortune.

He is a man of simple tastes. One of the thoroughfares in Montreal which the visitor is expected to see is Sherbrooke Street. If one could think of Montreal as one thinks of New York, it would be styled the Fifth Avenue of Canada's chief city. It is the street upon which front the homes of many of Montreal's foremost citizens. The two streets also have another characteristic in common. The houses are not equally pretentious, the owners of some caring less than do their neighbors about external appearances. The block of gray stone houses known as Prince of Wales Terrace would be especially noticeable for its plainness. One of these has been the home of Sir William for forty-five years.

The office where he has conducted his tobacco business for so many years that it has become one of the landmarks of the city is even more unpretentious and indicative of the tastes of its occupant. It contains no rich furnishings, no highly polished cherry tables and leather-upholstered armchairs and sofas. In one room the visitor sees two or three clerks. In the next, at a modest desk, is seated a gray-bearded man in plain black. He rises, takes the hand of the visitor in both of his, and welcomes him with the formal courtesy of the old school modified and warmed by a smile that makes the visitor feel at home.

The visitor is not long in the dark as to the secrets of Sir William's success in life, for a chat with him is quite apt to reveal that he is a believer in the gospel of work.

An independent thinker and a lover of his country, he long ago formulated a plan for its benefit and the method of carrying it out. "Build up the country in its children" became his motto. As his wealth grew he sought means of applying it. He observed that, among other things, Canada needed trained engineers for its future development. He thereupon provided McGill University with a fully equipped engineering building. Following this came his gifts of a physics building and a chemistry building, and an endowment for the maintenance of this work.

These efforts at the realization of his idea were not to be the culmination. Canada is essentially an agricultural country. A large proportion of its people support themselves by the tillage of the soil and by animal products. He discerned the fundamental importance of a prosperous and contented rural population if the future of Canada should be what he wished for it. How to reach the children of the land was, perhaps, the most difficult of his problems.

Often the problem and the man who promises a solution develop alongside each other. This happened in the case of the rural problem of Canada. Sir William is the largest stockholder in the great Bank of Montreal. He is also one of its directors. The policy of Canadian bank directors has long included the establishment of branch banks in prosperous farming communities for the purpose of receiving deposits. Sir William noticed that in the communities where creameries were located the deposits increased in a marked measure. He inquired further, and learned something of the methods employed in the operation of these creameries. What had been accomplished in Prince Edward Island, his native place, especially attracted his attention. This was largely due to the work of one man. That man was James Wilson Robertson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying for the Dominion, another Scotchman. Twelve years ago the two began laboring together, the one furnishing the means, the other executing the idea. Sir William used to think of his share as "putting in a little yeast." If one may be permitted to carry the simile a little further, Dr. Robertson may be said to have co-operated by kneading the dough and setting it in the oven.

In this fashion began the execution of the agricultural phase of Sir William's idea for the improvement of Canadian life, which has been labeled the Macdonald Movement for the Improvement of Rural Conditions.

To those unacquainted with Dr. Robertson's origin the burr in his speech would betray it. He was born fifty-two years

MACDONALD COLLEGE

TRAINING THE SCHOOL CHILDREN TO RURAL OCCUPATIONS

THE SCHOOL GARDEN IS ONE OF THE
KEYS OF THE MACDONALD MOVEMENT

FCG

"BY EXPORTING HAY CANADA WAS DEPRIVING ITSELF OF A PORTION OF ITS WEALTH-PRODUCING ENERGY"

ago on a farm at Dunlop, in the county of Ayr. In his eighteenth year his father migrated with his family to a farm in the neighborhood of London, Ontario. The lean-faced youth was ambitious to become a physician, but fulfillment of his desire meant money for training. There was little available for such a purpose. His father was gaining his livelihood in part from the purchase of dairy products for export to Great Britain. A knowledge of the dairy business, possibly, would assist in furnishing the means. Near Ingersoll, Ontario, was a first-rate cheese factory where he could learn thoroughly how the best export cheese was made. He began with a wage of $13 a month. The work included tasks which could not have been altogether congenial. He was called upon to scrub the factory floor, no pleasant work for a man of the sensitive nature of young Robertson.

The young man's employer became ill. Demonstrated capacity resulted in the selection of Robertson to manage the factory. His management was a success from the start. Ability, conscience, and energy produced cheeses which won the respect of the critics. The output of the factory was soon recognized as among the best in the country. Time passed. His winters were spent in reading and the study of literary and scientific subjects. One winter he studied at Woodstock College. This was his only college training. In summer he was doing what he could to make cheese manufacturing a success, and, thinking large things and connecting their accomplishment with small beginnings, he resolved to do all that lay in his power to bring Canada's dairy products to a higher level in quality. Then he went "north and west," the synonym in Ontario at that time for Horace Greeley's advice to a young man, and took charge of a factory at Cotswold, Wellington County, for a joint stock company of farmers. In a few months he was supervising with success the operation of eight factories.

Not all of the farmers knew how to make the most of their herds, either in quantity or quality of product. He arranged to meet those who needed this kind of knowledge and offered suggestions as to feeding and caring for their animals. As he learned how to present

DR. JAMES WILSON ROBERTSON
Formerly Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying for the Dominion

the fruits of his experience and thinking in an interesting and practical way the meetings grew in size and numbers and the Ontario politicians began to observe the results. It was noted that he had something to say that bore fruitage. The politicians said, "We can do something for our farmers in this direction." This led to his connection with the noted Agricultural College at Guelph as Professor of Dairy Husbandry. He was now, at the age of twenty-eight years, fully entered upon the field of educational work, with little prospect that his youthful ambition to be a minister to human bodies would ever be fulfilled.

For four years he served at Guelph so successfully that the latter half of his term of service found him also serving Cornell as a non-resident lecturer. In this period he was not only lecturing and carrying on research work for the benefit of his lectures, but he was also exhibiting his capacity as a commercial agent and using his powers of observation abroad. He was sent to London to look after a Government exhibit of cheese and butter. There he found that Canadian products were in competition with those of Denmark and other near-by countries. "Why should not Canada have the British

trade?" he said to himself. And, finding that one of the holds which these foreign countries had upon British markets was quality, he visited those countries and studied their methods of production. When he came back, he was ready to tell Ontario how to increase its sales in the mother country. It was by furnishing what was desired of high quality. In 1890, at the age of thirty-three, he was appointed the first Commissioner of Dairying for the Dominion, with headquarters at Ottawa.

Taking pieces of metal and fashioning them into a successful machine is one thing. It is quite another to mold an unorganized mass of human beings into an effective machine for the accomplishment of better things, each unit, perforce, remaining independent in volition. The new Commissioner possessed the large ness and clarity of vision, the technical knowledge, the organizing ability, the energy, the enthusiasm, and the capacity for expression essential to the success of such a task. He sent out traveling dairies, distributed educational bulletins, and went around preaching the doctrines of better farming and better products in his plain, logical, pithy fashion. He taught that hay-selling robbed the soil of its plant food at a rapid rate, and when hay was exported the Dominion was depriving itself of a portion of its wealth-producing energy. The hay from two hundred acres, he asserted, contained more of the elements of soil fertility than were carried away in $6,000,000 worth of butter. In the export of cheese the same was true. He was teaching a people the value of conservation of natural resources and extending an industry which educates the mind and improves social conditions.

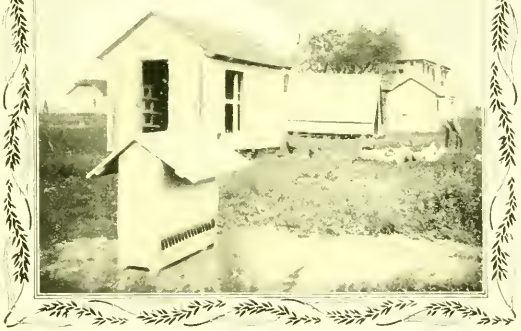
There were whole provinces in which dairying could be introduced to the advantage of the inhabitants and the Dominion. The words "paternalism" and "Socialism" had no terrors for him, nor did they have for the people of the different provinces after experiencing his form of "paternalism." In 1892 the people of Prince Edward Island had lost their general markets through the operation of the McKinley Tariff Bill, and had become disheartened. The Federal Government of the Dominion agreed to lend some money for the development of the dairy industry in the island, and Commissioner Robertson took charge. He started co-operative cheese factories. He also undertook to find a market for the product. The milk producers were charged a percentage to cover the cost of operation. Within five years dairying in the island had reached such proportions that it no longer needed assistance and had recompensed the Federal Government for all its effort. Where in 1892 four feeble creameries produced cheese valued at $8,448, in 1901 forty-seven creameries put out cheese and butter to the value of $566,824. This product was of high grade. Robertson's work had developed winter butter-making as well as summer cheese-making. A people had been helped to help themselves, hope had been stimulated, and a door opened to prosperity. The local government now employs a traveling instructor in cheese and butter making, who visits all the factories frequently so as to maintain and advance their standard of production. In 1895 Commissioner Robertson began to help the Northwest Territories in the same way, practically all the creameries being in a bankrupt condition and the crops poor. People were trekking from the Territory. The tide was turned, the people were lifted over their difficulties, and now they have prosperous diversified farming.

HOLSTEINS ON ONE OF THE SUCCESSFUL CREAMERIES, AT ERNSCLIFFE, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

SHEEP-RAISING IS A LARGE SOURCE OF PROFIT IN NOVA SCOTIA

The quality of the cheese and butter product of Canada was improved to such a degree within the decade and a half between 1890 and 1905, comprising the period of Dr. Robertson's incumbency of the commissionership, that the exports of these products rose from $9,700,000 to $31,500,000 a year. This was an increase from an average of $2 to an average of $5 for each man, woman, and child in Canada, the latter sum averaging more than $10 for each person living on a farm. It is not often that a man's efforts can be so concretely measured. Looking into the background of this single accomplishment, one sees that it has a close connection with the fruitage of life itself. With the means to provide them, doors to fresh contacts are opened and the desire is increased for higher culture as expressed in more comfortable and artistic surroundings in the home and greater opportunities for obtaining education.

Dr. Robertson is essentially a pioneer. Having planted the seed, demonstrated how to make it fruitful, and won friends



THE COLONY PLAN OF RAISING FOWLS AT MACDONALD COLLEGE

for it, he leaves the harvesting to others and presses into a fresh field. One forward step each year is his aim. By 1895, when he was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture, in addition to his office of Commissioner of Dairying, the Dominion had been leavened rather thoroughly as to the advantage of dairying. There remained the marketing end to be perfected. The goods were not reaching the English market in good condition, and the price that their quality warranted, therefore, was not being obtained. Steps were taken to develop a chain of cold storage that should begin at the creamery and terminate only at the market on the eastern side of the Atlantic. The idea was approved by Parliament, and once more "paternalism" was permitted to perform its work. To-day, assisted by the Dominion Government, the chain is complete. It serves not only for butter, but for every other product that requires refrigeration. The service extends from one end of the Dominion to the other, and is within reach of producers both great and small.

The tale of his multiplied activities and accomplishments in the combined offices is a long one. Whatever things would work together to make farming more profitable through economical management and in improvement in quality of product, to that he turned his attention. Did he desire to assist in the development of a bacon industry? He experimented with different foods, and, sitting astride the animals, killed them with his own hand, in order to determine the effect upon them in relative vitality by counting their dying gasps and feeling the force of the pulsing heartbeats in the struggle against death. What poultryman has not sighed for a large supply of eggs in the winter season, when the prices are high? By taking fowls back to the simple life of pure air, plain food, and plenty of exercise, Commissioner Robertson demonstrated how they could be made to lay abundantly when the temperature was fifteen degrees below zero.

Having rounded out in a measure his scheme for improving agriculture as a profitable occupation for adults, he turned his attention to the future of Canadian farming. At this point his planning began to parallel the idea of Sir William C. Macdonald. He, too, was thinking of Canada's future in its children.

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

There are few thinking people in the United States who do not realize that there is great room for improvement in educational facilities in the rural sections of the country, and also a demand for better equipped farmers. Canada's problem is the same as that of the United States.

Lord Salisbury once said that the great problem, not only of England, but of all humanity, is to maintain the fertility of the soil by the activity of plants and the activity of bacteria. Three essentials for the progressive development of human life are: (1) food, (2) protection for the young, and (3) continuation of the lessons of experience. The three fundamental occupations, therefore, in Dr. Robertson's view of life, are farming, home-making, and teaching. Upon this "tripod," as he calls it, he is building his scheme for rural improvement. Whether we like it or not, it must be that some shall till the soil if the human race is to survive. How are the conditions to be amended? Dr. Robertson proposes two ways:

(1) By practical illustrations of how the occupation in each locality may be made more attractive, profitable, and satisfying to those engaged in farming.

(2) By such an adjustment of schools and of training that the children will be attracted to rural occupations and will be qualified to be successful in them.

This is his educational platform. Dr. Robertson is constructive. He always has an end in view. These two planks comprise the platform of the Macdonald Movement, which he organized.

Working in harmony with Sir William and backed by the funds of this constructive manufacturer, Dr. Robertson introduced the leaven of a system which correlates education with agriculture from the primary school in the country district to the college. The two men have provided a specimen of what they think the Dominion of Canada needs, in the hope that its value will be so clearly demonstrated that the people will carry it forward themselves. The gifts of Sir William are intended as leaven only.

HIGH DEVELOPMENT IN PEACH CULTURE

The philosophy and practice of this pair of men in their undertakings for "building up the country in its children" are illustrated in the method which they took for teaching the lesson of crop improvement to Canadian farmers. In 1899 Dr. Robertson wished to learn whether the country was ripe for the acceptance of the theory that it is worth while for a farmer to use the best seed, and whether the interest of children in agriculture could be stimulated. He took from his private purse the sum of $100 and offered it in prizes to Canadian boys and girls who would send him the largest heads from the most vigorous plants of wheat and oats taken from their fathers' farms. The response was remarkable. The letters which Dr. Robertson received from the farmers and their boys and girls were so suggestive and encouraging that the following winter he said, in substance, to Sir William:

"Here is a great chance to do some educational work in progressive agriculture; to do something interesting, something attractive, something definite, something beneficial to the whole community, something easy, and yet with plenty of difficulties. Farmers and their families may fail to appreciate the educational advantages of a plan or scheme set out in a written statement, but here is something which would be so helpful and instructive to boys and girls that they would go on with it, and the habits of observation and thought and study would go on with them. I would like you to give me $10,000 for prizes to set and keep this thing going for three years."

Sir William gave the money with a right good will. For the main competition the competitors were required to pick each year by hand the largest heads from the most vigorous and productive plants in sufficient quantity to obtain seed from these heads to sow a quarter of an acre the following year. The careful records which were kept of the number of grains a hundred heads, and also of the weight, showed that in the three years the percentage of increase on the average for the Dominion for spring wheat was 18 per cent in the number of grains and 28 per cent in the weight, while in the oats the figures were 19 and 27 respectively. These were the results from several hundred seed grain plots operated by

boys and girls under eighteen years of age.

As may be imagined, the children were not the only ones who gained from this practical demonstration. Their parents and neighbors learned the lesson also. This contest gave birth to the Canadian Seed Growers' Association, organized for the purpose of improving the crops of Canada; it is coextensive with the Dominion. It was estimated in 1906 that the crops of Canada already had been increased in value to the extent of half a million dollars as a direct result of the competitions. Moreover, it had been demonstrated that children could be interested in agriculture.

Manual training, the vehicle by which agriculture and education were to be brought together, was the next step. Arguing that an example provided in a town is the most effective method of stimulating the officials of rural schools, Sir William, upon the advice of Dr. Robertson, founded throughout Canada manual training centers at twenty-one places. These were attended by 7,000 children and cost $3,600 a month for teachers. At the end of three years the local authorities were free to continue the schools or not, as they chose. The leaven performed its task. In every case the school was taken over and others added. In Nova Scotia more than a score of school centers of the Macdonald type have been built and are conducted by means of local funds. In Ontario the three Macdonald centers have grown to more than twoscore.

The next step was the introduction into the rural schools of manual training, modified for the performance of its new duty. In order to make manual training effective in the country, and of such a nature as to accomplish the desired results, it was essential that it have certain characteristics. It was desirable that nature study, elementary biology, and elementary agriculture should become a part of the curriculum. The two leaveners now took two steps. They introduced the leaven of school gardens and the consolidation of rural schools. School gardens were attached to each of five schools in each of five provinces. A trained instructor was put in charge of each group of five schools, devoting one day a week to each school in his circuit, and giving instruction to the teachers as well as the children. The gardens have been a marked success, not only educationally as manual training, but agriculturally. Most useful lessons were learned of the advantages of using selected seed, of the methods of protecting crops from insects and fungous diseases, and of the rotation of crops. At a school garden in Prince Edward Island the children reaped 32 per cent more wheat from a plot sown with selected seed than from a similar plot sown with unselected seed. In most of the gardens two plots side by side were planted with potatoes. The treatment of each plot was similar in every respect, except that the plants in one were sprayed with Bordeaux mixture to prevent blight. In every case the yield of potatoes from the sprayed plot was larger than the other. The increase was from 41 to 111 per cent. Bowesville, Ontario, the center of the largest potato-producing section of eastern Canada, was put on another footing of profit by the work done at the Macdonald school garden attached to the school there.

As remarkable as these results with crops were the effects on the children themselves. In Ontario uniform examinations for entrance to the high schools are held in July. In 1906, in Carleton County, in schools without gardens 49 per cent of the candidates passed, while of those who came from the five schools to which were attached gardens 71 per cent were successful. Apparently the work with the hands in the garden increased the capacity for work with books.

Sir William founded four consolidated schools, one in each of the provinces of Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The school work was graded, provision was made for classes in manual training, household science, and nature study based on work in school gardens, and wagons were provided for the transportation of children. The cost of the schools for the three years was $180,000. This leaven also accomplished its mission. Local school boards are consolidating the feeble country schools. In Nova Scotia alone there are more than twenty-two consolidated schools in the room of fifty-three of the old type. Consolidation in Canada, where it has been

tried, has raised the standard of rural education and increased the daily attendance from 50 to 100 per cent.

These educational reforms created a demand for teachers trained in nature study, agriculture, manual training, and household science. In order to meet this demand, Sir William provided at the Ontario Agricultural College, at Guelph, two large buildings for the residence and training of teachers. This school also trained for the business of home-making in the country, the college having already provided for agricultural education.

The crown of all is Macdonald College, at Ste. Anne de Bellevue. The province of Quebec, unlike several of the other provinces, has no agricultural college supported by public funds. Sir William has supplied the deficiency with an institution which rounds out the plan of the Macdonald Movement. Intended for training in agriculture, home-making, and teaching, it is probably the best equipped and most advanced institution of its kind in the world. It stands for the advancement of education, the prosecution of research work, and the dissemination of knowledge, all with particular regard to the interests and needs of the population in rural districts. It is Sir William's greatest yeast-cake. It is the supreme illustration of Dr. Robertson's methods of leavening. The mere fact of its existence is an educational force, for it advertises the underlying idea of the Macdonald Movement and sets people to thinking about it.

Its value in this respect was not forgotten when the site was selected. The college stands at one of the few points in Canada through which the two great Canadian trunk railways pass. These roads cross through the very center of the farm within a few yards of each other, and the buildings are visible to every transcontinental traveler. It is a display advertisement of the first rank. It does for Canadian rural education what the eleven-ton cheese exhibited at the Chicago Exposition in 1893 by Dr. Robertson did for Canadian cheese. It sets people to talking about it. Relatively few farmers' children will have an opportunity to enter an agricultural college. The stimulation and technical knowledge must be brought to their door. The very fact that it was thought worth while to spend so much money in support of an idea indirectly serves as a stimulus to the adoption of the rural school system to meet the needs of the people it serves.

Who shall foretell the results of the efforts of the two Canadian leaveners? The United States, as well as Canada, has an interest in them. Although Dr. Robertson has given up the principalship of Macdonald College, he will continue the promotion in Canada of the application of the principles of rural education lying at the base of the Macdonald Movement. He intends shortly to begin a journey through various parts of Europe, extending it afterwards to Japan, Australasia, India, and South Africa, for the purpose of investigating rural conditions in the interest of Canada, and to present the educational ideas he has developed. It may be added that the United States, on his return, is likely to receive some of the benefit of his experience and study.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 002 783 055 9